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HOW much longer shall we allow 15,000 persons to be annually cut off, unnaturally and prematurely, in this gay and wealthy metropolis? How much longer shall the pain, misery, and waste of money, consequent on the want of proper sanitary arrangements, be borne and suffered? We have often asked the question; we have long endeavoured by all the means in our power to convince the public, how much misery and loss might be prevented by simple and comparatively inexpensive measures, and we must continue to do so as the best mode of bringing about the changes so much to be desired. "Let it be remembered that a sickly population is one of the most costly burdens of a state. Health is the poor man's capital in trade; and whatever deteriorates that entails a direct loss, and eventually a heavy money charge, upon the community. The enormous amount of poverty and destitution in this country, and the consequent necessity for an impost of nearly 8,000,000*l.* sterling annually for its relief, are in a great measure due to the pauperizing effects of preventible disease." But these are not the only social evils involved in this important inquiry. The localities that are the nurseries of sickness and death, are almost invariably found to be the haunts of immorality and crime. Filth and squalor are as productive of moral debasement as of physical depravation; the two natures of man are so intimately connected, that the defilement of the one is generally associated with pollution of the other.

If the proprietors, architects, and builders who read our journal, instead of merely admitting the truth of what is constantly being said in it on this subject, and agreeing as to the worth of suggestions made in it for bringing about an improved state of things, would carry these suggestions into effect in the course of their practical operations, they would most materially assist in benefitting the world. Routine so thoroughly possesses us, that nine men out of ten who rise from the perusal of an article showing the evils of some ordinary mode of construction, or of the want of certain arrangements, thoroughly convinced of the truth of it, will, in the next house they build, follow the old road, and continue the erroneous mode, or omit the required arrangements.

Before we can hope to see much good done, the public must be made to feel thoroughly the necessity of the change demanded.

The Metropolitan Sanitary Association, to aid in bringing this about, have just now issued their first report, headed, "The Public Health a Public Question,"\* which, it is to be hoped, will awaken public attention to the subject. It comes at a moment when precautionary measures are much needed, but when, unfortunately, legislators are not very likely to move. The society have already been active;

deputations of the body have attended the prime minister and others on leading sanitary grievances; they have met almost day by day for some months past, and have sent various petitions to Parliament. Money, of course, is needed, and we hope the publication of this report will lead immediately to an accession of subscribers.

Referring to the present Metropolitan Sewers Commission, and the inability of the Commissioners to devote the time required for its extensive operations, the Report says:—"It is not a matter of surprise to this association, under such circumstances, that an outfall for London has not yet been determined—that house and street drainage is not proceeded with—and that even now houses are rotting and becoming most unhealthy, in consequence of the want of communications with sewers within a short distance. The neglect of the Commission to see to the providing of a sufficient current of water to cleanse the sewers is a subject of no little surprise, but the neglect to trap the gullies already existing is calculated seriously to endanger the health of every person who passes by. The greater prevalence of epidemic disease, of late years, taken in connexion with the increasing foulness of the gases escaping from the gully-holes, is not an accidental coincidence."

Against the abominable tax on light and health the association protest strongly; urging correctly, "that health is the capital of the working man, and that, whatever be the necessities of the state, nothing can justify a tax affecting the health of the people, and especially the health of the labouring community, whose bodily health and strength constitute their wealth, and oftentimes their only possession."

That a free supply of light and air is essential to human existence, all the experience of sanitary reformers proves. The agricultural labourer, having an abundant supply of light and air, will live longer, and enjoy better health, than the metropolitan working man, more amply fed, but robbed of air and sun: the metropolitan out-door labourer will live longer than the better fed and clothed tradesman who spends the greater part of his life in a close, dark dwelling.

From an analysis of the 60,000 deaths from consumption which annually take place in England and Wales, the conclusion has been arrived at that tradesmen are nearly twice as liable to consumption as the gentry, "owing chiefly to the hot, close, ill-ventilated workshops, in which the former pass so many hours of the day; that in-door labourers are more subject to consumption than those who follow their employments out of doors, though exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather, and earning less wages, and having, consequently, worse food, clothing, and lodging; and that of in-door labourers, those engaged in workshops are more subject to consumption than those employed at home."

What precautionary measures will do for health may be illustrated by reference to the small-pox. In Russia, previous to the introduction of vaccination, one-seventh of the population died of the small-pox. In Denmark, through strict laws relating to vaccination, mortality from small-pox has been scarcely known since 1800. In Bavaria, as long ago as 1820, this disease was exterminated. Yet in England, through care for the liberty of the subject (?), during the three years ending 1840, the average annual deaths from small pox was twelve thousand!

Amongst the illustrations of the effect of disregard of sanitary arrangement, the report gives a startling description of a plague spot in the immediate neighbourhood of one of the most beautiful parts of the metropolis, a neighbourhood studded thickly with villas and mansions—namely, Baywater, and Notting Hill, in the parish of Kensington. It is called the Potteries, and comprises some 7 or 8 acres, with about 260 houses (if the term can be applied to such hovels), and a population of 900 or 1000:—

"The occupation of the inhabitants is principally pig-fattening: many hundreds of pigs, ducks, and fowls are kept in an incredible state of filth. Dogs abound for the purpose of guarding the swine. The atmosphere is still further polluted by the process of fat-boiling. In these hovels, discontent, dirt, filth, and misery, are unsurpassed by anything known even in Ireland. Water is supplied to but a small proportion of the houses. There are foul ditches, open sewers, and defective drains, smelling most offensively, and generating large quantities of poisonous gases: stagnant water is found at every turn, not a drop of clean water can be obtained,—all is charged to saturation with putrescent matter. Wells have been sunk on some of the premises, but they have become, in many instances, useless, from organic matter soaking into them: in some of the wells the water is perfectly black and fetid. The paint on the window frames has become black from the action of sulphuretted hydrogen gas. Nearly all the inhabitants look unhealthy, the women especially complain of sickness, and want of appetite: their eyes are sunken, and their skin shrivelled."

"It is difficult to state the amount of disease produced by so much organic matter decomposing in the locality, and saturating the atmosphere and water used by the inhabitants. But during three years ending December 1846, there were seventy-eight deaths: of these, sixty-one were under fifteen years of age, fifty-five under five years. The average duration of life in the three years was only eleven years and seven months. In the first four months there occurred twenty-eight cases of small-pox, or one to every thirty-six of the inhabitants, while throughout the other part of the parish of Kensington, with a population of 97,000, only fourteen cases occurred, or one to seven thousand—showing that the potteries district is one hundred and ninety-four times more liable to small-pox than the remaining portion of the parish. The same may be said of typhus fever and some other zymotic diseases."

The report asks if there be no possibility of cleansing this more than Augean stable; and replies, that "the only difficulty lies in the fact that some of the worst parts of the district are the property of one of the guardians."

There must surely be some overstatement here.

When it is proved that the money-loss through typhus fever alone in the metropolis, during the five years 1843-47 was 1,328,000*l.*, and that this might have been prevented, the necessity for an Amended Bill for the Prevention of Contagious Diseases must be evident.

The daily removal of house refuse is of the greatest consequence: thousands are slain by its non-removal. When rain falls on a surface loaded with decomposing organic matter (the back-yards of innumerable houses), when warmed by the sun, it readily yields to the atmosphere vapours charged with disease and death.

A striking evidence of the injurious effect of the effluvia of decomposing animal matter was given at the Whitechapel Union, in 1848. Opposite the workhouse, only a few feet off, was a manufactory of artificial manure. In one morning sixty of the children were seized with diarrhoea, and this was attributed, by the medical attendants, to the disgusting effluvia. Legal steps were adopted, and

\* "First Report of the Metropolitan Sanitary Association on the Chief Evils Affecting the Sanitary Condition of the Metropolis, with Suggestions for their Removal; and containing the Proceedings of the Public Meeting held at Freemasons' Hall, Feb. 28th, 1850, and of the Deputations to the Premier, the General Board of Health, and the Chamber of the Exchequer." Published by the Association, 10, Craig's-court, Charing-cross.